

DOI-BLM-CO-N040-2015-0053 EA

Project Name: South Cliffs Pinyon-Juniper Removal

Proposed Action. Encroaching pinyon and juniper trees would be mechanically removed with a hydro-axe, mulcher, roller-chopper, chainsaw, loppers, or similar equipment in the 118-acre project area. A hydro-axe or similar large equipment would be used to remove pinyon and juniper trees where feasible. Hand-cutting could be used to remove any remaining pinyon and juniper trees that are inaccessible to a hydro-axe or other large equipment due to large rocks, steep terrain, or other limitations. Hydro-axe and hand cutting treatments would target only pinyon and juniper trees, leaving shrubs, grasses and forbs relatively undisturbed, thus protecting soils from erosion and maintaining the herbaceous understory. The removal of encroaching pinyon and juniper trees would improve conditions for greater sage-grouse in preliminary priority habitat and preliminary general habitat as well as improve conditions for mule deer and elk in mapped severe winter range.

Description of hydro-ax work. A contractor would grind/mulch pinyon and juniper trees with contractor furnished rubber-tired equipment (e.g., hydro-axe, fecon bull hog or similar equipment).

Specifications:

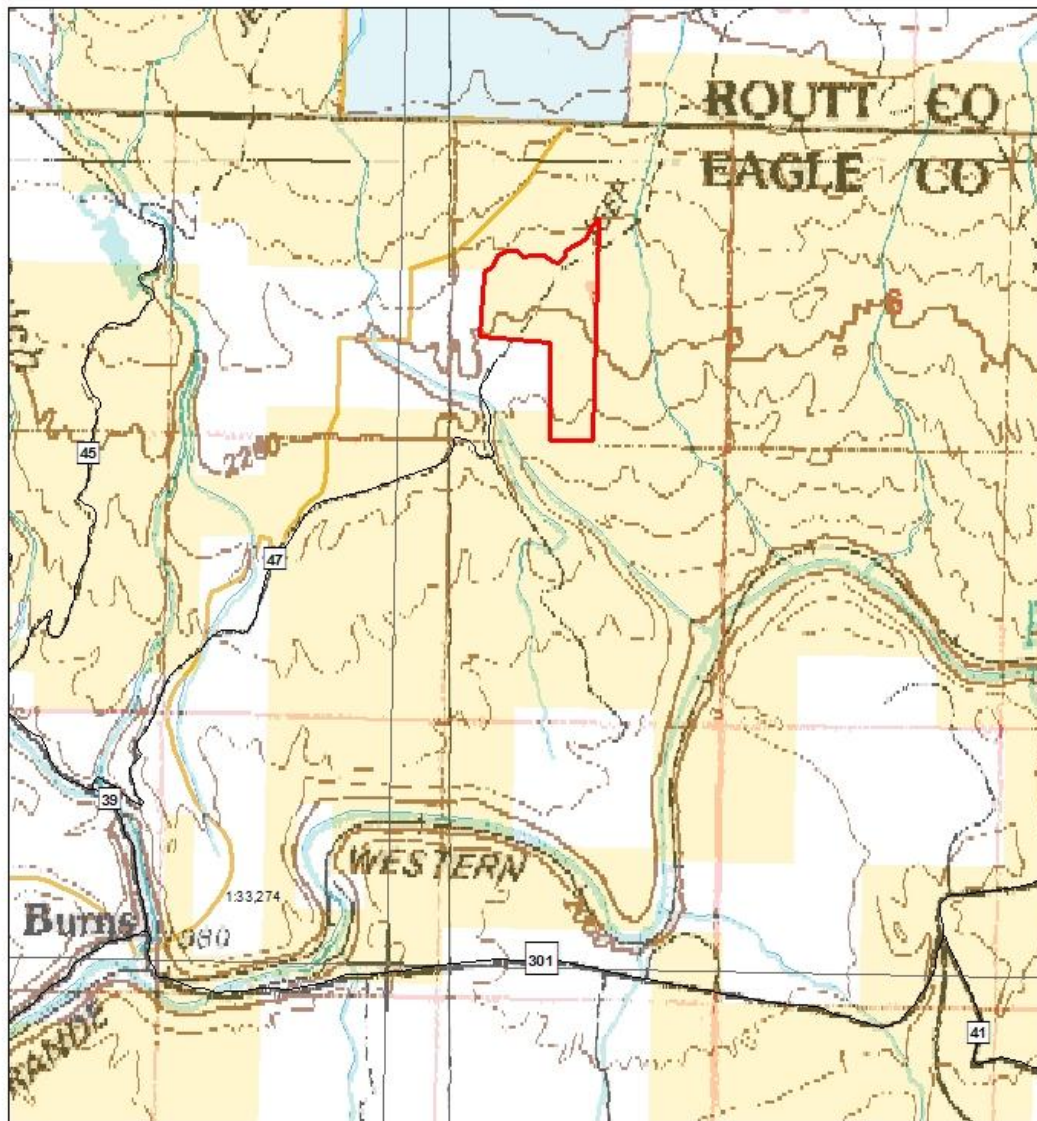
- The contractor will drive the rubber-tired equipment (e.g., hydro-axe, flail) off-route within areas identified for treatment, removing all parts of the tree to a stubble height of 6" or less.
- Vegetation will be reduced to a mulch material with a minimum of 80% of the woody material less than 1" in diameter and 6" long. The mulch will be scattered evenly across the soil surface and not remain in piles greater than 8" deep.
- The contractor will be responsible for power-washing or comparable cleaning, to ensure that noxious weed seeds are removed from any and all equipment and vehicles used on the project prior to entering the project area. BLM will require a pre-work inspection to ensure compliance.
- The contractor will post signs (1/8-1/4 mile either side of work area) on public access roads and trails warning visitors of dangerous heavy equipment use in the area. These signs will be checked daily to ensure they are in place. The signage will be coordinated with and pre-approved by the BLM project inspector.
- The BLM project inspector must be informed of any objects or sites of cultural, paleontological, or scientific value such as historic or prehistoric resources, graves or grave markers, human remains, ruins, cabins, rock art, fossils, or artifacts. The objects shall not be damaged, destroyed, removed, moved, or disturbed. Any person who knowingly violates this may be subject to fines and/or imprisonment (Public Law 16-95; 16 U.S.C. 470).
- Any routes that may be created during the project will be covered with woody material to prevent continued use after project completion.
- Wheeled motorized equipment will not be operated when conditions are muddy or the soil moisture is high enough for the vehicles to leave ruts over 4.0 inches in depth.

Work is expected to be implemented between March 15 and June 30, 2015. If this timeframe is not achieved, work could be implemented between September 1 and December 30 or April 1 and May 15 as funding is available.

Description of hand-cutting (lop and scatter). Encroaching pinyon and juniper trees within the project area that cannot be removed by a hydro-ax or similar large equipment could be hand cut with chainsaws and/or loppers. Felled trees would be lopped and branches scattered. Chainsaw work would be completed by an interagency fire crew or contract crew.

No Action Alternative. Encroaching pinyon and juniper trees would not be removed from the project area. No change from current management would occur.

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Legend

- County Road
- Project Area (118 acres)
- Bureau of Land Management
- Private

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



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T2S R85 W Sec. 1
Blue Hill USGS Quads
Routt County, Colorado
Colorado River Valley Field Office
Bureau of Land Management

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